DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 355 SO 024 366

AUTHOR Habashi, Zeinab S.
TITLE The Perceived Influence of Children in Family Purchasing Decisions. A Comparison between American and Egyptian Families in the U.S.A.
PUB DATE [94]
NOTE 22p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Children; *Child Role; Comparative Analysis; *Consumer Economics; *Decision Making; Economic Research; Family (Sociological Unit); *Family Characteristics; Foreign Nationals; Higher Education; Parent Child Relationship; *Purchasing
IDENTIFIERS *Egyptians

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of children on family purchasing decisions across two populations, white Americans and Egyptian families residing in the United States. The study also sheds some light on cultural influences that determine consumer behavior of Egyptian American families as distinguished from white American families. This study attempted to discover the influence of children on decision making in white American and Egyptian American families from the perception of both children and parents and further to discover if the influence children have differs between the two groups. Areas such as children's influence on family marketing decisions, and characteristics of the Egyptian family were investigated. The data for this study were gathered from 88 white American children and their parents and 78 Egyptian children and their parents residing in the United States. Four research questions were explored: (1) How does age affect children's perceptions of their influence on family purchasing decisions and how does this factor differ between the two groups? (2) How do children's perceptions of their influence on family purchasing decisions for family vacations differ between the groups? (3) How do children's perceptions of their influence differ for various subdecisions of product categories for each family purchasing decision? (4) How do parents perceive the influence of their children on family purchasing decisions and how are their perceptions different from those of their children? The findings show that culture was not a significant factor. Age did appear to be a significant factor in all children's influence for vacation selection. (DK)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 380 355

CG

The Perceived Influence of Children in Family Purchasing Decisions A Comparison Between American and Egyptian Families in the U.S.A.

Dr. Zeinab S. Habashi
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dr. ZEINAB S. HABASHI
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 024 366

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Perceived Influence of Children in Family Purchasing Decisions A Comparison Between American and Egyptian Families in the U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the influence of children on family purchasing decisions across two of the world's population, white Americans and Egyptian-Americans (that is Egyptian families residing in the United States). The study also sheds some light on cultural influences that determine consumer behavior of Egyptian American families as distinguished from white American families.

This study attempted to discover the influence of children on decision making in White Americans and Egyptian Americans from the perception of both children and parents and further to discover if the influence children have differs between the two groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies were related to individual parts of the current study such as:

1 - children's influence on family marketing decisions.

2 - the Egyptian family

Children's Influence on Family Marketing Decisions

According to Needham, Harper and Steers' study (1975), the extent of the influence a child may have on the parent's

purchasing decisions seems dependent on at least two primary factrs: the child's assertiveness and the parent-child interaction. They found that some women stated: "children influence my choice of brand, with most products." Wells and Loscinto (1966) indicated that the influence of children differs by age. Older children are more selective and based their choices more on their past successes and failures.

The conclusion of their study was that children, especially suburban children, were quite influential, although the amount of influence varied from product to product.

Children learn from the family, and they play an important part in family decision making. The child may be the primary decision-maker for the children's items. Moreover, children are likely to influence decisions for products consumed or utilized by the whole family such as food items, vacation plans, etc. (Assael, 1981; Syzbillo, Sosaine, & Tenefein, 1977).

THE FAMILY

Berelson and Steiner (1964) stated:

> Nuclear family means the immediate group of father, mother, and children living together. The extended family refers to the nuclear family and other relatives, including grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, and in-laws.

The family is the individual's primary informal group. It differs from large social systems in the sense that it performs what might be termed a mediating function. The norms of large social systems (culture, subculture, reference groups, social class) are filtered and interpreted by individuals in a family

setting. Family influences are important in two major ways: (1) they form the experience base that influences individual evaluative criteria and beliefs, personality and motives, and (2) they affect the decision making process that is involved in the purchase of goods and services.

Kenkel (1963) found that "although family forms and functions vary from culture to culture, the family as an institution is universal."[p. 78]

THE EGYPTIAN FAMILY

The traditional Egyptian family is an extended one, consisting of the husband and wife, young children, unmarried sons and daughters, married sons and their wives and children, and divorced or widowed daughters. Currently, the extended family is still found in the villages of Egypt; however, the nuclear family (consisting of a mother, a father and children) is more prevalent in the cities,

Religion is an important element of Egyptian culture, greatly affecting family lifestyle. In Egypt, religion is not merely a set of beliefs, but a way of life that pervades every system in the society. Enforcement of Islamic laws is taken seriously. Thus, religion has tremendous influence on family life.

Relationships between couples and other family unites are built on mutual responsibility.

Under the law of Islam, a woman, like a man, is a responsible free agent, fully entitled to all civic rights.

Social Change and the Egyptian Family

Changes in Egyptian society resulting from industrialization and urbanization are more likely to have a different impact on the family than those experienced in western countries, primarily because of the different cultural and economic factors.

An increase in urbanization is one of the features of social change that has an impact on family relations [Abdel-Kader, 1971].

In the cities, separation of work from family effects the relationship among family members, including children. Women and children participate in family decision making concerning their needs.

Egypt's rapid industrialization and urbanization, combined with equal opportunities in education and labor markets for both sexes are have a profound impact on the Egyptian family [National Charter, Cairo, Egypt, 1981]. As in other countries, social change in Egypt has produced changes in family role, statuses, and power as well as other aspects of family relationships [Lutiyga, 1970; Edwards, 1975; Goode, 1963; Nimkoff, 1965].

These changes have an impact on the family power structure. Some of this impact is referred in an increase in the power of the children in family decision making.

RESEARCH MODEL USED FOR THE STUDY

Consumer behavior model which was developed by Engel, Blackwell, and Kolatt is the conceptual framework for this study.

Such a model would include: problem recognition, search for information, alternative evaluation, choice, and outcome, as also used in the works of Engel, Blackwell, and Kolatt [1978]; Bernhardt [1974]; Davis and Rigaux [1974]; Davis [1970]; Blood and Wolfe [1960]; Munsinger, et al. [1975]; Hempel [1974]; Syzbillo and Sosaine [1976]; and Gredel [1976]. The model can easily be utilized to explain the buying habits of a family as well as those of an individual. The model of Engel, et al. is chosen to illustrate the consumer decision purchasing process. The model [Table 1] explains the stages in consumer decision process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample:

The data for this study was gathered from 88 white American children and their parents and 78 Egyptian American children and their parents. Of the American children, 31 were age 16, 30 age 13, and 27 age 10. Of the Egyptian children, 22 were age 16, 22, age 13, and 30 age 10. Thus the entire sample size was 166 families yielding a power of at least .90 to detect a medium effect in analysis of variance at the .05 level of significant [Cohen 1977, p. 215].

Research Questions

1. How does age affect children's perceptions of their influence on family purchasing decision and how it differs between White American and Egyptian-American families?

2. How do children's perceptions of their influence on family purchasing decisions for the product differ between White American and Egyptian American families?

3. How do children's perceptions of their influence differ for various sub-decisions of product categories for each family purchasing decision?

4. How do parents perceive the influence of their children on family purchasing decisions and how are their perceptions different from those of their children?

Research Instruments

The instruments for this study were two questionnaires, one for the children and one for each parent. The questionnaires were designed to measure the perception of parents as well as children in making purchasing decisions. Vacation was chosen as service concerns the entire family.

Six sub-decisions were used for vacation. The vacation sub-decisions were need, time, place, duration, amount to be spent and means of transportation.

The sub-decisions used in this study were chosen to illustrate the different processes of the consumer decision making (Table 2).

Likert scale was used to measure the influence of children on family purchasing decisions. In this seven point scale, one represents the least influence and seven represents the most

influence with the numbers between representing the middle degrees of influence.

Table 2

Decision Process Related to Vacation Sub-Decisions

Decision Process	Vacation
a) Problem Recognition	a - need for
b) Search for Information	b - none
c) Alternative Evaluation Criteria	c - amount of money to be spent - duration - transportation to be used
d) Purchasing Process (Choice)	d - when to go - place to go
e) Post Purchase Evaluation	e - none

Reliability

Many researchers strongly support a Likert-type seven-point scale for dependent variables. Guilford [1954] argues that the number of scale points is a matter of empirical determination in each situation. In addition, Lehman and Huber [1972] suggest the use of five to seven points to analyze individual behaviors but fewer to analyze group behavior.

Analysis

The dependent variable of the research is the "perceived influence of children on family purchasing decision making." The

independent variables age, sub-decisions, and race/culture were used in examining research questions 1, 2 and 3 as follows.

A three way analysis of variance was conducted with repeated measures on sub-decisions of product categories. The design is age (3), culture (2) product categories (1), where culture is subject factor and product category is within subject factor.

The analysis of research question 4 was tested by a 4-way repeated measures analysis of variance for family member (parent/child), age, race/culture, product as within subject factors, age and race/culture as between - subject factors. The question was answered by the main effect of family member and qualified by interactions with family. Finally, the data were examined in the light of the research questions.

Analysis of the Date for Family Vacation:

The analysis of variance showed vacation was significant at $p<.001$ and the vacation by age interaction was significant at $P<.05$ level [Table 3]. Thus, the perception varied related to the children's age. Culture by itself and the vacation by culture interaction were not significant variables.

Table 3

Analysis of Variance Results of WA and EA Families' Perceptions of Their Influence on the Purchasing Subdecisions for a Vacation

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F	p-level
		Between Subjects			
Culture	3.78	1	3.78	.290	.591
Age	48.14	2	24.07	1.845	.161
Age X Culture	47.37	2	23.69	1.816	.166
Subject Groups	2021.12	155	13.04		
		Within Subjects			
Vacation	281.10	5	76.22	40.076	.001**
Vacation X Culture	6.86	5	1.37	.721	.608
Vacation X Age	37.56	10	3.76	1.975	.033*
Vacation X Culture X Age	15.24	10	1.52	.801	.628
Residual	1473.96	775	1.90		

*p < .05

**p < .001

WA children perceived slightly different influences on the various vacation subdecisions. They perceived about the same and the most influence on need, time, and means of transportation. However, they perceived a bit more influence on place. They perceived the least influence on duration and amount [Table 4]

EA children perceived about the same influence on need, time and place. They perceived less influence on duration, amount, and means of transportation [Table 4].

Variability of Children's Ages on Vacation Subdecision

The ANOVA table reveals that the vacation by age interaction was a significant variable in children's influence on the subdecisions for a family vacation [Table 3]. Age was supported by the correlation coefficient table [Table 5], which showed that children's influence on means of transportation was significant, but low. The analysis indicated that the older the children the greater their influence on means of transportation.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of WA and EA Children's Perceptions of Influence on the Purchasing Subdecisions for Vacation

	WA[a]		EA[b]	
Subdecisions	X	SD	X	SD
Need	4.41	1.75	4.07	2.00
Time	4.45	1.93	4.32	2.04
Place	5.22	1.63	4.92	2.03
Duration	3.86	1.84	3.70	2.07
Amount	2.91	1.37	3.10	1.95
Means of Transportation	4.13	2.10	3.85	2.14
Totals	24.98	8.61	23.96	9.29

[a]N = 87

[b]N = 74

Table 5

Correlation Coefficient of WA and EA Children's Age and Vacation Subdecisions (N = 162)

Subdecisions	Correlation Coefficient	p-Level
Need	.004	.963
Time	.085	.277
Place	.101	.203
Duration	.074	.317
Amount	.129	.100
Means of Transportation	.203	.010*

*p < .05

Variability of Family Members' Perceptions for Vacation Subdecision Variables

Table 7 indicates that when EA and WA Parents means scores were combined, they perceived less influence for their children than their children themselves did. However, when looked at by culture, it can be seen that while WA Parents' Perceptions of their children's influence on the vacation sub-decision variables was less than their children's perceptions. EA Parents and children's perception are almost the same [Table 8].

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of WA and EA Family Members Perceptions Influence on Purchasing Subdivisions for a Vacation

	Parents[a]		Children[b]	
Subdecisions	X	SD	X	SD
Need	4.19	1.65	4.26	1.87
Time	3.97	1.61	4.39	1.98
Place	4.48	1.54	5.08	1.82
Duration	4.05	1.51	3.79	1.94
Amount	3.03	1.80	2.99	1.95
Transportation	3.69	1.73	4.00	2.16
Totals	23.40	8.12	24.51	8.91

[a]N = 99

[b]N = 161

of WA and EA Children's Perceptions of

acation

Time		Place		Duration		Amount		Trans.	Total Scores
	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
6	1.97	3.50	2.10	2.42	2.10	3.62	2.14	23.00	9.06
0	1.48	4.30	1.66	2.97	1.79	4.57	2.10	26.87	8.71
6	1.42	3.74	1.75	3.26	2.02	4.13	2.03	24.81	7.99
8	2.21	3.57	2.08	3.10	.38	3.20	2.19	22.53	10.1
7	1.93	3.46	2.02	2.36	1.62	3.68	1.81	22.64	8.5
0	1.85	4.14	2.12	3.82	1.84	4.91	2.07	27.23	8.3

27 $^{d}N = 30$ $^{e}N = 22$ $^{f}N = 22$

17

Purchasing Decisions of a Vacation

Rating by Race

	Need		Time		Place		Duration		Amount		Trans.		Total Scores	
Age	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD
						WA								
P[1]	3.92	1.76	3.76	1.73	4.43	1.50	3.83	1.55	2.28	1.61	3.22	1.67	20.98	8.51
C[b]	4.14	1.75	4.45	1.93	5.22	1.63	3.85	1.84	2.91	1.97	4.13	2.10	24.43	8.42
P[c]	4.39	1.55	4.11	1.51	4.51	1.58	4.21	1.48	3.55	1.75	4.03	1.71	23.96	9.29
C[d]	4.07	2.00	4.32	2.04	4.92	2.03	3.70	2.07	3.10	1.95	3.85	2.14	24.79	7.68
						EA								

P = Parents C = Children

[a]N = 127 [b]N = 87 [c]N = 132 [d]N = 74

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings show that culture was not a significant factor in this study. Age, however, did appear to be a significant factor for both WA and EA children's influence for vacation. There are many variations on the subdecisions related to age/or culture.

Children perceived themselves to have less influence on such subdecisions as amount and duration, greater influence on such subdecisions as place.

There are significant difference in parents' and children's perceptions for vacation. Thus, parents perceive that their children have less influence than the children themselves amount and they perceive that their children have greater influence than their children themselves perceive for some subdecisions for vacation such as amount, need and time.

These conclusions support the Wells and Loscinto's conclusion (1966) that influence both the purchase of products and the choice of brands. They also support the Ward and Wackman (1972) and McNeal (1979) that older children have greater influence that younger children on family purchasing decisions.

From findings, it can be concluded that children's influence varies by product category, provides evidence that children's influence varies by age.

There were some differences between WA and EA families. With regard to a family vacation, WA parents perceived less influence for their children than the children themselves perceived. However, both EA parents and children perceived about the same influence for the children. Marketers should consider

this closely when planning their campaigns.

One of the vacation subdecisions, means of transportation, age was a factor for both WA and EA families. In general, the older the child the greater the influence. Thus, marketers should concentrate on appeals to the older teen.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

The following are some recommendations for future research based on this work:

1. In this study, the children chosen as subjects were age 10, 13, and 16. Future research might investigate younger children.
2. This research used only two subcultures. Future research comparing other subcultures would be of value.
3. Only one product was investigated in this study. Future research could see if other products provide the same results.